

Zechariah Chapter Eleven

Introduction:

This chapter contains a prophecy of the destruction of the Jews, and shows the causes and reasons of it; and is concluded with a prediction concerning antichrist. The destruction of the temple and city of Jerusalem, and the inhabitants of it, is signified by figurative expressions, #Zec 11:1,2 which occasions an howling among the shepherds or rulers of Israel, on account of whose cruelty and covetousness the wrath of God came upon them without mercy, #Zec 11:3,5,6 but inasmuch as there were a remnant according to the election of grace among them, named the flock of the slaughter, Christ is called upon to feed them; who undertakes it, and prepares for it, #Zec 11:4,7 but being abhorred by the shepherds, whom he therefore loathed and cut off, he determines to leave the people to utter ruin and destruction, #Zec 11:8,9 and, as a token of it, breaks the two staves asunder he had took to feed them with, #Zec 11:10,11,14 and, as an instance of their ingratitude to him, and which is a justification of his conduct towards them, notice is taken of his being valued at and sold for thirty pieces of silver, #Zec 11:12,13 but, in the place of these shepherds cut off, it is suggested that another should arise, who is described by his folly, negligence, and cruelty, #Zec 11:15,16 to whom a woe is denounced, #Zec 11:17.

11:1 Open thy doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour thy cedars.

This can be a reference to the temple or to the city of Jerusalem. The temple was constructed of fir timbers from Lebanon, and there is some evidence that the gates to Jerusalem were also constructed of cedar. This is the beginning of the prophecy concerning the fall of Jerusalem of the Jewish nation as a whole in the day of Jesus Christ. We will see the coming of Christ and the anti-Christ in this chapter and the outcome of the refusal of the Jews to accept their own Messiah. The whole event being foretold by God will not stop it from unfolding in history.

2 Howl, fir tree; for the cedar is fallen; because the mighty are spoiled: howl, O ye oaks of Bashan; for the forest of the vintage is come down.

These are symbols of the rich and powerful men and the leaders or rulers of the various provinces of Jerusalem. "Forest of the vintage" can be translated fortified city or a closed city with gates such as Jerusalem was.

3 [There is] a voice of the howling of the shepherds; for their glory is spoiled: a voice of the roaring of young lions; for the pride of Jordan is spoiled.

This is understood to be the leaders of Israel who have lost their power and authority. They held themselves up as being the most pious, of being the representatives of God himself and basked in that glory which belonged to God alone. Now they are crying or howling at the loss. Remember their words from the New Testament that because of Christ the

whole world would be destroyed. Meaning their world, their power would no longer exist if they allowed Christ to prevail and for this reason they sought how they could kill Jesus.

4 ¶ Thus says the LORD my God; Feed the flock of the slaughter;

Some versions of the Jewish Bible add “me” after GOD in the beginning of this verse and say this indicates that this is God speaking to the Messiah. God then is here telling Jesus to feed the Jewish people in general, the flock of the slaughter. Of course in the New Testament we see Jesus say this very thing, I was sent to the lost tribes of Israel to call them to repentance. Feed the flock meant the same thing then as it does now, so God has said to Christ in His first coming, tell them like it is, teach them what they should be doing. Show them how I desire to be worshiped.

5 Whose possessors slay them, and hold themselves not guilty: and they that sell them say, Blessed [be] the LORD; for I am rich: and their own shepherds pity them not.

This does not refer to the Romans who were in possession of the land in the day of Christ. This is directed at the Pharisees, the doctors and lawyers of the Word of God who by false teachings are destroying the very soul of God’s people. God is rich and able to provide, but the shepherds of Israel have no pity on the others and only look to take of God’s riches and glory for themselves.

6 For I will no more pity the inhabitants of the land, says the LORD: but, lo, I will deliver the men every one into his neighbor’s hand, and into the hand of his king: and they shall smite the land, and out of their hand I will not deliver [them].

Inhabitants or people of the land refer to the more common people in the Jewish nation. The temple rulers and the rich of the temple cult looked down at the farmers and shepherds. Now God has sent Jesus to them however and will no longer have pity on them because of their ignorance. The religious rulers have misled and not taught them so they are ignorant of the truth but now should have seen Christ and know the truth. This refers to the many divisions within the nation that will come about in the final siege and destruction of Jerusalem for God has here told them the city will be destroyed.

7 And I will feed the flock of slaughter, [even] you, O poor of the flock. And I took unto me two staves; the one I called Beauty, and the other I called Bands; and I fed the flock.

Christ here says He will do what He has been called to do, feed the whole with the Word of God. He seems to be making special provision here for the poor. Most take this to mean the remnant or the believers who will find the truth in Him at His incarnation. The Jews see the two staves (a staff)

as being the division in the Old Testament of the nation of Israel into two parts, the Northern and Southern Kingdoms. I believe to be consistent however this must be set during the first coming of Christ. The two staffs would then be a division but I believe the divisions are of beauty for those who hear and believe He is the Lord and of bands those who do not accept Him as their Savior.

8 Three shepherds also I cut off in one month; and my soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me.

Many try to list three persons in the leadership of the nation of Israel here. I rather believe the three sects among the Jews, the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes, are what is in view here. All three are proven to be wrong in the end of things and thus false shepherds of the people. The timing is also true when it is seen as the final fall of the Jews and Jerusalem in 70 ad.

9 Then said I, I will not feed you: that that dies, let it die; and that that is to be cut off, let it be cut off; and let the rest eat every one the flesh of another.

This eating of one another literally happens in the siege of Jerusalem. Another reason I see this as the time frame for this prophesy. If correct Christ is then saying to the Jews, I fed you, I left you the apostles who tried to feed you, I am going to do this no longer, whom dies will die. Simply being Jewish is not enough, you must believe in Jesus Christ. In this chapter we see that the Jews were warned and had the Word of God to them and should have believed in Christ when He came in the flesh.

10 And I took my staff, [even] Beauty, and cut it asunder, that I might break my covenant which I had made with all the people.

The staff of Beauty, the Gospel of Christ is cut asunder that is separated from the beliefs held by the Jewish people who held onto their birthright in Abraham, not of faith in Christ. This sets before us the beginning of the New Covenant that Jeremiah speaks of that is given birth to with the coming of Christ and formalized at Pentecost.

11 And it was broken in that day: and so the poor of the flock that waited upon me knew that it [was] the word of the LORD.

The believers were cut off from or thrown out of the Jewish synagogues. Remember at the conversion of Saul to Paul he was seeking to kill the Jewish believers, not just Christians. The Jews had no law that allowed them to prosecute Gentiles. The believers saw Christ as the Messiah and now not being a people to the Jews were poor and outcast to the Jews, but they alone now had the Word of God.

12 And I said unto them, If ye think good, give [me] my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty [pieces] of silver.

Directed at the unbelievers as a question, what price am I worth to you? They set the price at 30 pieces of silver which they paid to have Christ delivered into their hands to kill him. If I am good, leave me alone, if not pay the price you find me worth and be rid of me might be another way of reading this.

13 And the LORD said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty [pieces] of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the LORD.

Cast it to the potter as we know from the New Testament it was used to buy the Potter's field, a place for burying strangers. The end is a sarcastic remark at the pitiful price they have appraised as the value of the Son of God their Messiah.

14 Then I cut asunder mine other staff, [even] Bands, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.

The end of either the Mosaic Law or of the form of civil government of Israel is in sight here. This addresses the two historical divisions within the nation of Israel but I believe here marks the division between those who will believe in Christ and those who will not. They will no longer be brothers living apart, but have nothing to do with each other. The only division to matter is to be of God or to be of the devil.

15 ¶ And the LORD said unto me, Take unto thee yet the instruments of a foolish shepherd.

This is addressed to the prophets of God that they dress like a shepherd and not prophets or priests of the temple. Particularly aimed at the prophets because the priesthood was so polluted even by this time in history.

16 For, lo, I will raise up a shepherd in the land, [which] shall not visit those that be cut off, neither shall seek the young one, nor heal that that is broken, nor feed that that stands still: but he shall eat the flesh of the fat, and tear their claws in pieces.

Not of the cut off branches but of the seed of promise. The Messiah will not attempt to save the ones who have wandered away of their own doing nor those who are weak in this faith. He will not heal this broken relationship caused by their unbelief. He will not hunt down and feed the one who knowing better remains where he is instead of seeking the new pastures opened by the Lord. The Lord shall remove and tear asunder all

the power they have, shall take their riches and scatter it to the poor. Here being a literal as well as a spiritual thing.

17 Woe to the idol shepherd that leaves the flock! the sword [shall be] upon his arm, and upon his right eye: his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened.

This could read to the false shepherd, the shepherd who is not a shepherd. Such will leave the flock and not feed or care for them. He will seek his own good and nothing for anyone else. He should be feeding the flock with his right hand or all of his power, since he is not God will take away that arm, that power. He is supposed to be wise and overseeing the affairs of the flock. He is not so God will remove the eye or his ability to oversee anything but his own ruin. As elsewhere this is a harsh warning to those God has called to feed his word to His people and to oversee His kingdom on earth. Such as dare call themselves preachers or elders will be held to a double of higher standing before God in the judgment.